

Message Text

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44

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SY-10 SCS-03 SCA-01 AID-20 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 OMB-01

DRC-01 /135 W

----- 040005

R 012030Z FEB 74

FM AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 98

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

AMCONSUL RECIFE

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINTS

SUBJ: POLICE ARREST SOCIAL WORKERS IN CATHOLIC ASSOCIATED
PROGRAM

1. IN A RECENT SERIES OF ARRESTS MILITARY SECURITY AGENTS
PICKED UP PERSONNEL WORKING FOR FASE, A RIO-BASED
COMMUNITY ACTION ORGANIZATION WITH PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO
HELP THE UNDER-PRIVILEGED. IT HAS BRANCH OFFICES IN
ELEVEN OTHER BRAZILIAN CITIES.

2. FASE OFFICIALS IN RIO SAY THAT TWO SOCIAL WORKERS
WERE DETAINED HERE JANUARY 24-25, AND THAT THREE PERSON-
NEL, INCLUDING THE LOCAL DIRECTOR, WERE PICKED UP BY
POLICE IN SAO PAULO JANUARY 28-29.

3. THOUGH FASE RECEIVES MUCH OF ITS FUNDING FROM
SEVERAL LEADING CATHOLIC CHARITIES AND IS HEADED BY AN
AMERICAN PRIST, EDMUND LEISING, IT IS NOT TECHNICALLY
A CATHOLIC-SPONSORED OR CONTROLLED ORGANIZATION. FASE

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HAS RECEIVED AID FROM MANY NON-CHURCH SOURCES, SUCH AS
THE INTER-AMERICAN FOUNDATION AND SEVERAL BRAZILIAN-BASED

AMERICAN FIRMS. USAID HAS IN PAST PROVIDED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE THROUGH THE SERVICES OF AN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR WHO HELPED ESTABLISH A PROGRAM EVALUATION SYSTEM.

4. EVEN THOUGH FOUR FASE SOCIAL WORKERS WERE ARRESTED ON SUBVERSION CHARGES TWO YEARS AGO, FASE LEADERS BELIEVED THEY HAD DISPELLED POLICE SUSPICIONS OF ORGANIZATION AFTER REPEATED CORDIAL CONTACTS AND AFTER THE FOUR WERE ABSOLVED AND FREED BY A MILITARY TRIBUNAL.

5. RIO FASE OFFICIALS WERE INITIALLY FEARFUL THAT RECENT ARRESTS MIGHT BE NEW CAMPAIGN AIMED AT THEIR ORGANIZATION. WITH THE INTERVENTION OF RIO'S CARDINAL SALES, THEY MET YESTERDAY WITH FIRST ARMY'S G-2, COL. PEDRO LUIS DE ARAUJO BRAGA. HE SAID THAT AUTHORITIES HAD NOTHING AGAINST FASE, BUT WERE INSTEAD CONDUCTING A NATION-WIDE CAMPAIGN TO DESTROY A NEWLY-DISCOVERED MARXIST-LENINIST SUBVERSIVE GROUP, WHICH IS RELATED TO THE TERRORIST-DIRECTED MOVIMENTO LIBERTACAO POPULAR. BRAGA IS SAID TO HAVE CHARGED THIS GROUP WITH INFILTRATING SOCIAL WELFARE ORGANIZATIONS THAT CONDUCT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AMONG THE LESS-PRIVILEGED AND THE WORKERS.

COMMENTS: SOURCES CLOSE TO CHURCH LEADERSHIP IN RIO HAVE LONG BEEN STATING PRIVATELY THAT THEY ANTICIPATED A GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGN SHORTLY BEFORE PRESIDENT-ELECT GEISEL ASSUMES OFFICE AIMED AT DISCREDITING THE CHURCH'S NUMEROUS COMMUNITY-ACTION PROGRAMS THROUGPOUT BRAZIL. THEY BELIEVE THIS CAMPAIGN HAS BEGUN WITH THE ARRESTS IN RIO AND OTHER CITIES. CONGEN BELIEVES IT ENTIRELY TOO EARLY TO JUDGE EXTENSIVENESS OR AIMS OF GOVERNMENT CAMPAIGN, OR IF, INDEED, ONE EXISTS AT ALL. DEPARTMENT SHOULD EXPECT, HOWEVER, THAT BECAUSE OF FASE'S NUMEROUS FOREIGN TIES, THE ARRESTS OF ITS PERSONNEL MAY DRAW SOME INTERNATIONAL PRESS ATTENTION AS WELL AS U.S. CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST.
BOONSTRA

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